



Commander, United States Naval Forces Central Command
Commander, United States FIFTH Fleet
Commander, Combined Maritime Forces

24 November 2009

Dear IA Sailor,

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank each one of you for your outstanding service to our Navy and our Nation. Your dedicated efforts support the establishment of critical regional security partnerships, provide tangible progress toward the defeat of violent extremists, and achieve the difficult tasks you often perform in Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM. Your steadfast commitment to excellence, dedication to duty, and unsurpassed devotion makes me proud. I would also like to pass along my sincere gratitude for the personal sacrifices that each of your families make during your deployment; without their daily commitment and unwavering support, your superb execution of this mission would not be possible.

While the principal reason for my letter is to thank you, I also seek your assistance in a growing concern: the emergence of sexual assault among our boots-on-the-ground Sailors. Allow me to be candid and clear: There is absolutely no place for it in our society or our Navy, and we will not tolerate it among the professional, devoted men and women of this great service. We must continuously watch out for our fellow shipmates and report all incidents to our chain of command.

I would also like to re-emphasize our Navy's commitment to controlling personal combat stress. As each of you well know, the IA mission can be extremely difficult and the stressors that come with the job can make our situations very demanding. I ask that each of you remain vigilant and aware of combat stress among your fellow Sailors. As I've told many of you, combat stress is an occupational hazard...and together we must work to reduce or eliminate its effects.

Finally, of all the many things for which I am grateful, the greatest among them is to be serving with phenomenal Sailors like you, who each day live our Navy Core Values. Happy Thanksgiving to you and your wonderful families!

Warm regards,

THOMAS A. CROPPER
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
Commander, Task Forces
Individual Augmentee